



United States Department of State

*Bureau of Oceans and International
Environmental and Scientific Affairs*

Washington, D.C. 20520

May 3, 2004

Thank you for the opportunity to express thoughts on these important topics. We anticipate that the discussion of the GMA in conjunction with the upcoming UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on the Law of the Sea (ICP) will be far-ranging. With that in mind, rather than suggesting specific comments on the experts report that could easily be quickly overtaken by the upcoming discussions, we prefer to underscore the importance of directing the discussions themselves towards an outcome that will advance the development of the GMA. In this vein, the United States would particularly welcome work towards identifying and agreeing on the process by which the “assessment of assessments” would be started. We would welcome discussions of such issues as who will run the assessment of assessments, how will they be chosen, and when will they begin their work.

With regard to the second question concerning specific issues that the first GMA might address, we think that discussion would be premature in June and could even detract from the overall establishment of the GMA. In short, we would prefer to allow the “assessment of assessments” to determine which specific issues might first be taken up, thus freeing our limited available discussion time to be concentrated on initiating a successful “assessment of assessments” and establishing an appropriately inclusive GMA.

We look forward to working with you further on this issue. We will endeavor to forward our list of participants for the GMA discussions as soon as possible. Again, thank you for the solicitation of input on this matter.

Sincerely,

Margaret F. Hayes
Office Director
Office of Oceans Affairs